

Australia's prime minister to ban climate boycotts



Brisbane, November 6 (RHC)-- Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison attacked environmental activists and vowed to prohibit climate campaigns aimed at boycotting businesses that collaborate with the fossil fuel industry in a speech delivered to the Queensland Resources Council, a group representing mining interests.

“We are working to identify mechanisms that can successfully outlaw these indulgent and selfish practices that threaten the livelihoods of fellow Australians, especially in rural and regional areas,” Morrison told the attendees of the conference in the city of Brisbane, Queensland, adding that “new threats to the future of the resources sector have emerged [...] A new breed of radical activism is on the march. Apocalyptic in tone. It brooks no compromise. It’s all or nothing.”

The Human Rights Law Center, the Australian Conservation Foundation, and the Greens immediately reacted saying the proposed legislation is undemocratic and an attempt to thwart people’s rights to protest, in order to please big corporations.

Executive Director of the Human Rights Law Center Hugh de Kretser recalled in a statement that boycott campaigns have always played a crucial role in the achievement of social and political advancements “from ending slavery to stopping apartheid.”

“It’s vital that people can come together and campaign against not only the companies that are committing human rights abuses or harming our environment but also the companies that profit from doing business with them,” Kretser added.

The Green party's leader Adam Bandt said the prime minister, who is a very vocal supporter of climate change denier U.S. President Donald Trump, is a direct threat to democracy and freedom of speech.

“The prime minister’s commitment to outlaw the peaceful, legal protest of Australian individuals and community groups reads like a move straight from the totalitarian’s playbook,” he said, adding: “Instead of getting tough on the climate crisis, Scott Morrison is dismantling democracy.”

The remarks came as climate change activists in Australia have been pressuring banks to not finance the controversial Adani coal project in Queensland and have called for a boycott of the companies providing goods and services to the proposed mine.

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